



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DHS ENCOURAGES CAREGIVERS TO “LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK” WHEN TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Human Services is reminding licensed child care providers across the state that are approved to transport children of the licensing rules and preventative measures to keep children safe when transporting them during summer months. In doing so, DHS licensing staff will be making extra visits to monitor child care agencies.

DHS is also encouraging parents and caregivers to “Look Before You Lock” car doors upon exit so that children are not left in the sweltering heat of a locked vehicle.

On an 80-degree day the temperature inside a locked vehicle increases 19 degrees in just 10 minutes; 29 degrees in 20; and 43 degrees in just one hour. For any human being subjected to such extreme temperatures, especially a child, the experience could prove fatal.

A child's body temperature increases 3 to 5 times faster than that of an adult, and children exposed to extreme temperatures can suffer heatstroke, brain damage and death.

“Parents and child care providers alike share our concern for the safety of children in summer heat,” said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. “By being aware of heat-related risks and dangers, we all can play a part in keeping children safe.”

The “Look Before You Lock” tagline is a nationally recognized reminder to parents and caregivers to A.C.T. to ensure that children are not left in harm's way:

A. Avoid Heatstroke

- NEVER leave an infant or child alone in a vehicle, even if a window is cracked or if you're parked in the shade.
- Look in the back seat every time you exit the car.

C. Create Reminders

- Place an item such as your workbag or purse in the back seat next to the car seat, so that you'll always check the back seat before you leave the car
- Have the child care agency call you if your child doesn't show up

- more -

**CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
615.313.4700**

T. Take Action

- If you see a child alone in a car, call 911.
- Know the warning signs of heatstroke, which include: red, hot, and moist or dry skin; no sweating; a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse; nausea; confusion; or acting strangely.
- If a child is in distress due to heat, get them out as quickly as possible and cool them off.

The Department of Health is also sharing this message on heat and transportation related dangers. The “Look Before You Lock” message is also being displayed on highway overhead signs across the state this summer in partnership with the Department of Transportation.

Anyone witnessing a transportation violation or other child-care violation is urged to call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261, a number that must be posted on all licensed child care buses. Those not adhering to safety requirements will face a range of penalties, from being put on notice, probation, paying civil penalties, to the suspension, or even denial or revocation, of their license. Find out more at http://tn.gov/humanserv/adfam/cc_main.html.

For more information and tips on keeping children safe in and around vehicles, visit <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/index.htm>.

More information is also available at kidcentraltn.com – your source for information on child health, education, development, and support.

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